

## Message Text

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11

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 DOTE-00 FMC-01 CG-00 OFA-01

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R 191330Z AUG 75

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2420

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE THESSALONIKI 0501

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECEM, SENV, PGOV, ELAB, GR

SUBJECT: FURTHER ON ETHYL-HELLAS AND THESSALONIKI  
PORT SITUATION

REF: THESSALONIKI 0499, 0488

1. SUMMARY: MINISTER OF NORTHERN GREECE MARTIS HAS  
BROKEN HIS SILENCE ON ETHYL-HELLAS SITUATION IN  
STATEMENT ISSUED EVENING AUGUST 18. PRINCIPAL AIM OF  
STATEMENT WAS TO CONVINCE THOSE STEVEDORES REMAINING ON  
STRIKE TO RETURN TO WORK. SINCE THESE ARE WORKERS  
HANDLING CARGOS IN HOLDS OF GENERAL CARGO SHIPS, PORT  
HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO RESUME FULL OPERATION AND CONGESTION  
NOW APPEARS TO BE INCREASING. SOME OTHER GROUPS ALSO  
BEING HEARD FROM. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS ARGUMENTATION LEADING UP TO CALL FOR FULL  
RESUMPTION OF WORK IN PORT AREA, MINISTER MARTIS  
REVIEWED DEVELOPMENTS WHICH RESULTED IN CLOSURE OF  
ETHYL PLANT. HE MADE CLEAR GOVERNMENT'S POSITION THAT  
ALL MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PROTECT HEALTH OF  
WORKERS AND POINTED OUT THAT STRINGENT SAFETY MEASURES  
AND CONSTANT SUPERVISION OF THESE MEASURES HAVE BEEN  
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IN EFFECT AROUND ETHYL INSTALLATION IN THESSALONIKI  
PORT. HE POINTED OUT THAT HIGH LEVEL OF ATMOSPHERIC  
POLLUTION RECORDED AUGUST 13, WHICH CAUSED WORKERS TO WALK  
OFF JOB, WAS ISOLATED ONE-TIME MEASUREMENT.

3. MINISTER ALSO SUMMARIZED VARIOUS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF CURRENT PROBLEMS. THESE INCLUDED LOSS OF "SEVERAL TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS" FROM PORT CLOSURES AND AN ADDITIONAL 35-40 MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY FROM LOST EXPORTS DUE TO ETHYL'S SHUT DOWN. IN ADDITION, OPERATION OF SEVERAL LARGE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES ASSOCIATED WITH ETHYL, SUCH AS ADJACENT FERTILIZER PLANT, WOULD BE DISRUPTED AND HUNDREDS OF WORKERS WOULD BE RELEASED BY BOTH ETHYL AND OTHER AFFECTED INDUSTRIES.

4. WITH THESE FACTORS IN MIND MARTIS CLOSED BY ASKING STRIKING WORKERS NOT TO ACCEPT SUGGESTIONS OF "IRRESPONSIBLE AND PROBABLY SUSPICIOUS PERSONS" AND ASKED EACH WORKER TO CONSIDER "HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS NATIONAL ECONOMY, PORT ORGANIZATION, THE TOWN AND HIS OWN FAMILY".

5. WHILE MINISTER MARTIS WAS CALLING PORT WORKERS BACK TO THEIR JOBS, OTHERS WERE ALSO REACTING TO ETHYL SITUATION. DISTRICT ATTORNEY, WHO HAS STARTED HIS OWN INVESTIGATION AS REPORTED THESSALONIKI 499, HAS RECEIVED MEMORANDUM FROM INHABITANTS OF COMMUNITY OF KORDELIO, NEAR ETHYL PLANT, ALLEGING THAT FUMES FROM ETHYL AND RESULTING ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION HAVE MADE CONTINUED HABITATION OF AREA AND WORKING OF NEARBY FACTORIES "PROBLEMATIC". TOWN COUNCIL OF ANOTHER NEARBY COMMUNITY, SYKIES, HAS PASSED RESOLUTION DEMANDING REMOVAL OF ALL ETHYL INSTALLATIONS FROM GREECE.

6. PASOK HAS ALSO SEIZED OPPORTUNITY TO ISSUE STATEMENT ASKING GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT "A COURAGEOUS SOLUTION" OF PROBLEM, NAMELY "TO REMOVE THE FACTORY OF DEATH, TO STOP SACRIFICING HEALTH AND LIVES OF WORKING PEOPLE, TO ASK ETHYL TO PAY RETROACTIVELY THE WAGES OF THE WORKING FORCE AND TO STOP ANY ACTION FOR ABOLITION OF DEPARTMENT OF TOXICOLOGY AT THESSALONIKI UNIVERSITY." (NOTE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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THIS IS FIRST TIME WE HAVE HEARD LATTER ACCUSATION.)

7. COMMENT: MINISTER'S STATEMENT WAS CAREFULLY AND IMPARTIALLY WORDED. WHILE HE AVOIDED ANY RECOMMENDATION THAT ETHYL-HELLAS RESUME OPERAION, HE POINTED OUT GREAT DAMAGES THAT WILL RESULT FROM ITS CLOSURE. IT APPEARS THAT HIS TACTIC AT THIS POINT IS TO GET PORT BACK TO NORMAL AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND HEN TO INVESTIGATE WHAT COULD BE DONE RE ETHYL SITUATION. MEANTIME, OF COURSE, FIRST OF PROBABLY MANY GRIEVANCES, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE, ARE BEGINNING TO BE VOICED. WE UNDERSTAND MARTIS ISSUED ANOTHER ANNOUNCEMENT THIS

MORNING ON SUBJECT, BUT AT THIS WRITING WE DO NOT HOLD TEXT.

8. EHYL OFFICIAL HERE SAYS POLLUTION ISSUE IS TRUMPED UP AND TRACES PROBLEM BACK TO LAST NOVEMBER'S WORK STOPPAGE, WHEN WORKERS STRUCK FOR 40 0/0 WAGE INCREASE BUT WERE FORCED TO SETTLE FOR 12 0/0 AFTER 14 DAYS (THESS 830, DEC 11, 1974). DISSATISFACTION HAS CONTINUED, EXPLOITED BY COMMUNIST AGITATORS, HE CONTENDS, RESULTING IN ANOTHER STRIKE IN JUNE (THESS 348). ETHYL HAS ADDRESSED CABLE TO KARAMANLIS, AND MINISTER OF COORDINATION PAPALIGOURAS, SETTING FORTH COMPANY'S SIDE OF DISPUTE. COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES ALSO CALLED THIS MORNING ON MINISTER OF INDUSTRY KONOFAGOS, WHO PROMISED TO VISIT THESSALONIKI IN NEXT FEW DAYS TO ATTEMPT RECTIFY SITUATION. ETHYL OFFICIALS FROM U.S. HEADQUARTERS ALSO ARRIVING HERE TODAY TO ASSIST. END COMMENT.  
BRENNAN

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